

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of determining network conditions, the method comprising:  
receiving a plurality data packets from a server computer via a network communication link; and  
determining a one-way transmission latency, responsive to the receipt of two or more of the plurality of data packets, wherein the one-way latency identifies a duration of time that it takes to receive a data packet from the server in relation to a previously received data packet.
2. The method of Claim 1, additionally comprising:  
accessing a timestamp in each of the plurality of data packets, each timestamp approximately identifying a point in time when the server computer began transmitting the respective data packet; and  
modifying each of the timestamps to account for any clock skew between a clock of the server computer and a clock of a receiving computer.
3. The method of Claim 1, additionally comprising reporting to a software module the transmission latency.
4. The method of Claim 1, wherein the data packets collectively comprise a portion of a media presentation rendered to a user.
5. The method of Claim 1, wherein the plurality of data packets are received via a modem.
6. A latency detector for determining a latency in data communication, the latency detector configured to determine changes in a one-way latency in data communication from a first computer to a second computer, wherein the one-way latency identifies a duration of time that it takes for the transmission of a data packet relative to a previously transmitted data packet.
7. The latency detector of Claim 6, wherein the latency detector is a program configured to execute in the second computer.
8. The latency detector of Claim 6, wherein the latency detector reports the transmission latency to the packet receiver.
9. The latency detector of Claim 6, wherein the transmitted packets collectively provide a streaming media presentation.

10. The latency detector of Claim 6, additionally comprising a modem for receiving the one or more data packets.

11. An electronic device for determining network conditions, the method comprising:

means for receiving a plurality data packets from a server computer via a network communication link; and

means for determining a one-way transmission latency, responsive to the receipt of two or more of the plurality of data packets, wherein the one-way latency identifies a duration of time that it takes to receive a data packet from the server computer in relation to a previously received data packet.

12. The electronic device of Claim 11, additionally comprising:

means for accessing a timestamp in each of the two or more data packets, each timestamp approximately identifying a point in time when the server computer began transmitting the respective data packet; and

means for modifying each of the timestamps to account for any clock skew between a clock of the server computer and a clock of the electronic device.

13. The electronic device of Claim 11, additionally comprising means for reporting to a software module the transmission latency.

14. The electronic device of Claim 11, wherein the data packets collectively comprise a portion of a media presentation rendered to a user.

15. The electronic device of Claim 11, wherein the plurality of data packets are received via a modem.

16. A system for determining a latency in data communication, the system comprising:

a server;

a network; and

a client comprising

a packet receiver which receives one or more data packets from a first computer via the network; and

a latency detector which determines changes in latency in data communication from the server to the client, responsive to the receipt of the data

packets by the packet receiver, wherein the latency identifies a duration of time that it takes to receive a data packet from the server relative to a previously received data packet.

17. The system of Claim 16, wherein the latency detector reports the transmission latency to the packet receiver.

18. The system of Claim 16, wherein the one or more data packets collectively provide a streaming media presentation.

19. The electronic device of Claim 16, additionally comprising a modem for receiving the one or more data packets.

20. A program storage device storing instructions that when executed performs the method comprising:

receiving a plurality data packets from a server computer via a network communication link; and

determining a one-way transmission latency, responsive to the receipt of two or more of the plurality of data packets, wherein the one-way latency identifies a duration of time that it takes to receive a data packet from the server in relation to a previously received data packet.

21. The program storage device of Claim 20, additionally performing:

accessing a timestamp in each of the one or more data packets, each timestamp approximately identifying a point in time when the server computer began transmitting the respective data packet; and

modifying each of the timestamps to account for any clock skew between a clock of the server computer and a clock of a receiving computer.

22. The program storage device of Claim 20, additionally comprising reporting to a software module the transmission latency.

23. The program storage device of Claim 20, wherein the data packets collectively comprise a portion of a media presentation rendered to a user.

24. The program storage device of Claim 20, wherein the plurality of data packets are received via a modem.